



**Connecticut Secretary of the State
Address Confidentiality Program - Summary**

Summary of the Program: The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) provides services to victims of crime. The ACP became effective on January 1, 2004. Program participants are residents of the State of Connecticut who have recently relocated and whose new location is unknown to the abuser and undocumented in government records. The goal of the Address Confidentiality Program is to help crime victims (family violence, sexual assault, injury or risk of injury to a minor, or stalking) keep their new address confidential.

The ACP offers its participants two services each of which helps keep the victim's new location secret. One part is the participant's use of an ACP substitute mailing address. The ACP provides cost-free mail forwarding services. The Office of the Secretary of the State serves as each program participant's legal agent for service of process and receipt of first class mail. The second part of the program prevents public access to a participant's actual address on government records including voter registry lists and keeps marriage records confidential.

The ACP Substitute Address: The ACP assigns each program participant a substitute address. The substitute address has no relation to a participant's actual location. The ACP address is a post office box and fictitious street address in Hartford, Connecticut. All ACP participants use the same address. The program assigns each participant a certification code to help differentiate their mail. A program participant's mail must include the corresponding certification code. Then the program forwards 1st class mail to each participant's actual residential address.

The Secretary of the State issues certification cards to each program participant. The certification card includes the program participant's name and signature, a certification code, the program address and the certification expiration date. When a program participant presents his/her certification card, public agencies (state and municipal) must accept the ACP substitute address as though it is a person's actual residential address.

Program participants choose when to use the substitute address. They decide if and when they reveal their actual address to a government employee. When an ACP participant chooses to reveal his/her actual address, the public agency is not legally obligated to keep that information confidential. In unusual situations, an agency may petition the Office of the Secretary of the State for an exemption to the ACP laws. If the Office of the Secretary of the State grants the agency an ACP exemption, program participants involved with that agency may have to reveal their actual location. Prior to granting an exemption, the Secretary of the State shall notify the program participant of the exemption, including the name of the agency and the reason(s) for the exemption. The Secretary of the State may not make any records in a program participant's file, other than the program address, available for inspection or copying except: (1) when a written request is made by the head of a law enforcement agency or the State Elections Enforcement Commission; (2) when directed by court order to release the information; and (3) when the program participant's certification has been cancelled. The Secretary of the State will, however respond to written requests to verify if a person is or is not a current program participant.

ACP Protected Records: An ACP participant, may present their certification card and request that their marriage records be kept confidential; their street and house number not be listed on a voter registry list; or that an agency use their program address in lieu of their confidential address. Marriage records and voter addresses will be kept confidential and will not be made available for inspection or copying except when: requested by a law enforcement agency; directed by court order; or notified by the Secretary of the State that the program participant's certification has been cancelled. Agencies will accept and use the program address as the program participant's residential, work or school address, in lieu of the participant's confidential address, unless the agency receives an exemption from the Secretary of the State.

Applying for ACP Participation: The Address Confidentiality Program provides substitute address services to residents of Connecticut. An applicant must be a victim of family violence, injury or risk of injury to a child, sexual assault or stalking, who has permanently and confidentially moved away from their abuser. Men, women and children can participate in the program. Participants complete applications through a community based domestic violence or sexual assault crisis program. These programs are located throughout the state. The application process involves meeting with an application assistant and receiving orientation information about the program. Application Assistants send the completed applications to the ACP office. The ACP office reviews the applications then assigns the ACP substitute address, certification code and creates an ACP Certification Card.